

Urges Check of Homes to Detect Radon

Geologic maps, including the New York State bedrock drawing, cannot be used to positively identify possible radon hazard zones.

That's the word from Dr. Robert Fakundiny, state geologist and chief of the state Geological Survey, who emphasizes that testing of individual homes is the only accurate way to determine indoor radon levels.

Random sampling earlier this year discovered some high radon levels in the Dansville area and around Conesus Lake.

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas, a decay product of natural radium within the earth. Radon exists in varying amounts

in all soils throughout the earth. Depending on location and house construction, radon can build up inside homes to levels much higher than those outdoors.

Studies of miners exposed to atmosphere with high concentrations of radon and other carcinogens over long periods have linked the exposure to higher than normal rates of lung cancer.

Some reports have implied that certain bedrock formations and geologic units are more likely than others to produce radon in homes. "No reported geologic studies in New York substantiate this notion, and until further

research is brought to bear on the problem, no relationship can be demonstrated between geologic formations as depicted on the New York State bedrock geology map and the occurrence of elevated radon levels in homes," Dr. Fakundiny said.

He added that, geologic units such as the "Reading Prong" and the "Marcellus Shale" in New York State that are often identified as sources of radon have been delineated on the state maps only on the basis of rock type, geologic history and ancient depositional environments and cannot be used as the sole basis for radon hazard identification.

Dr. Fakundiny indicated that

uranium and its decay products are unevenly distributed within rocks and soils. "Further studies may find high radon levels associated with several bedrock and surficial formations but even these occurrences will probably have numerous irregularities and variation." According to Dr. Fakundiny, the degree of radon leaking into basements is likely to depend on several factors, including thickness of glacial sediment cover, groundwater conditions, soil permeability, presence of local crushed zones within rock, atmosphere pressure and degree of soil saturation, radon content of water supplies, and the nature of the construction of the basement.

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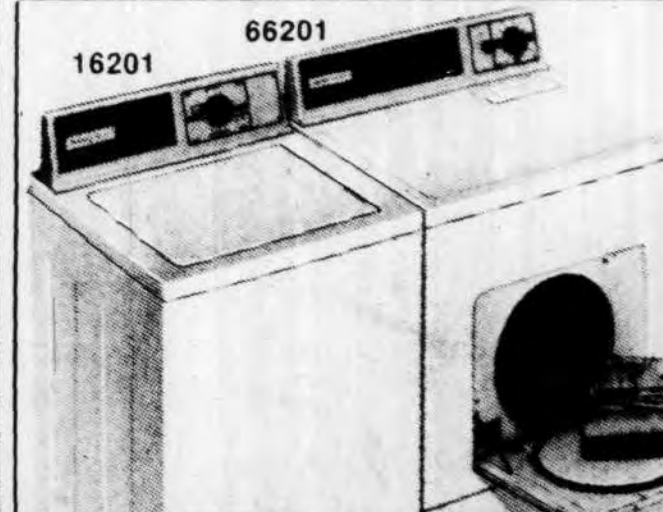
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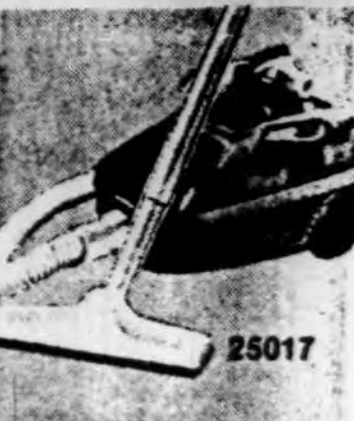


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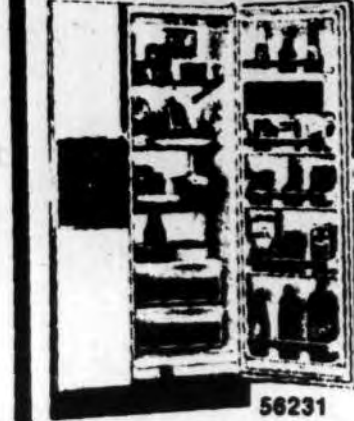


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